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Bibles and Religions out
versus in the Public Schools.

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OUT *versus* IN
THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY
ALLEN PRINGLE.

" 'Tis education forms the common mind :
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

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PREFATORY NOTE.

In addressing educationalists and others on the burning and vexed question of the Bible in or out of the Public schools, a word of explanation may be due both reader and writer.

I have written what follows at the request of a friend of Secular Education, who generously pays for the printing and distribution of the pamphlet among those engaged in educational work and others who, we think, might possibly profit by its perusal.

ALLEN PRINGLE.

Selby, Ont., September, 1891.

BIBLES AND RELIGIONS

OUT *VERSUS* IN

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SECULAR or Sectarian, which? This is the question to be settled. Shall the public schools, supported by public money, be really public and secular or private and sectarian? I say "private," because no school can be public in the proper sense, where religious tenets are taught or religious exercises performed which some of its supporters conscientiously reject as erroneous and injurious to the child. I say "sectarian," because any formula of Bible doctrine, no matter how general or fundamental, which could possibly be agreed upon by the different sects of Christianity (were such an agreement possible) would be sectarian to those outside Christianity, and these constitute three-fourths or more of mankind.

But?
A universal religion would be non-sectarian; all others are sectarian.

Shall the public schools, then, be secular or sectarian? Shall they or shall they not teach religion of any kind? Shall they use any of the different Bibles of the world, said to contain Divine Revelations, or shall they use none of them?

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Reason has but one answer to these questions; right has but one. They both answer one way, while sentiment and superstition answer another. (No offence here to the sincere believer of any religion, whatever it may

be. . A great writer has said that "the religion of one age is the superstition of the next," and in these change-ful times it hardly takes an "age" to accomplish such a mental transformation.) Those under the dominion of the latter—that is, sentiment and superstition—are probably still in a majority throughout the world as well as in this province of Ontario; and in an overwhelming majority in the near (yet so far) province of Quebec, where the Church not only dominates the schools, blighting education, but dominates the State, vitiating legislation in the body politic. But ought unreasoning majorities to settle questions of this kind? They probably will continue to do so till they get more light, or the onward march of intelligence forces them into the channel of progress, which it is sure to do ere long. The next generation will have more sense and less sentiment. I do not mean the higher sentiments, which cannot be too strong under the guidance of reason, but the lower sentiments and passions at present largely under the control of neither reason nor right.

The masses of humanity are, unfortunately, still governed by feeling more than reason, by the promptings of passion and prejudice rather than the instincts of justice and right—by the influence of early education and preconceived opinions rather than the potency of present facts and experience.

That the question before us is a very important one, involving issues and influences of great moment, no thinking man will deny. As already intimated, it can have but one fair answer on any principle of justice and equal rights. Not only so, but the true answer carries with it the only solution of the many evils which beset

*It is the very soul of our civilization. Can
he deny this?*

sectarian schools, and the only solution of that paramount evil and incubus on education in Ontario and Quebec, "separate schools."

What is the answer, and what is the solution? It is simply this,—That no citizen ought to be compelled, either directly or indirectly, to pay for teaching his own or his neighbour's children a religion he does not believe—that public schools supported by the State ought to be public, and open to all without offence to any. In a word, they ought to be secular, free from Bibles of all kinds and religions of all kinds, which, always and everywhere, with few exceptions in which Christianity cannot be included, have been a constant source of dissension, strife and dispute.

This is an age of change, and the change is, on the whole, in the direction of true progress. Reaction there is here and there, and reactionists there are everywhere, but the paralysis of impotency is coming over them. Old systems and ideas which have had their day and have served their purpose as necessary factors in the evolution of things are rapidly passing away, and being replaced by better systems and more enlightened ideas. The most popular and venerable of them are at length being called upon to show their right to a longer lease of life. The religious creeds and theological cults—no matter how hoary and formidable with age and prestige—are not in the least exempt from this ordeal. Nor is it easy to see on any reasonable grounds why they should be, for their past and present influence on mankind for good or ill has been prodigious. A devotee of one of them has wisely said to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good," and we take him at his

word. This is what the historical research of the day and science in the hands of impartial investigators, are doing, and St. Paul is discredited by the modern Gentiles by a method of his own suggestion. One of his *loudest* followers of to-day (Moody) is more discreet (no doubt because of the age he lives in), for he warns us that if we "begin to reason we are lost." All the same the world begins to reason. Mere *authority* is waning. Dogma is on the down grade even in that infallible, arbitrary and "*only true church*," Rome. And the doctrine of *ex-cathedra* in open questions, in Protestantism as well as Romanism, is going to the wall where it ought to go. From the *brutum fulmen* of the Vatican at Rome down to the "believe or be damned" scarecrow of the backwoods Methodist exhorter, all fails to frighten the "hard-heads" of these days, who may be found within the fold of almost every religion as well as outside them. Men are everywhere beginning to think and act for themselves, not only in secular matters but in all other matters. Educated and intelligent people of to-day, have their own opinions and beliefs on speculative religious questions, instead of accepting them "ready made" as formerly, on the authority of churches, priests, or even divine revelations. Each has his own religion or no religion, which is his right and which no man has the right to question, so long as he does not allow his religion to interfere with the equal rights of others,—which no government or other authority has the right to tax, or suppress, or support (except to protect) so long as he fulfils his secular duties as a citizen; and these of course include his moral and social duties. The citizen can have no religious duties to the State. These apper-

why?

tain solely and exclusively to himself. As the State cannot be damned here or hereafter for the citizen, so the citizen ought not to be damned here or hereafter for the State. Nor ought any citizen to be saved or damned spiritually or secularly for any other citizen. Vicarious philosophy of this sort, which is altogether outside the true instincts of benevolence, has no resting place in Secularism. "Each tub should stand on its own bottom."

It, therefore, follows that either every religion ought to be taught in the public schools or no religion ought to be taught there.

But as the teaching of everybody's religion to everybody is quite out of the question as impracticable, the *nobody's religion* must stand logically and equitably as the only alternative.

Because a certain tax-payer's creed (or want of creed) happens for the time being to be unpopular, and he himself in the minority, is no good reason why his rights should be ignored and the majority lord it over him. I agree with the great John Stuart Mill when he says in his famous essay on "Liberty," "If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be in silencing mankind."

This is the true principle of right and reason, no matter what popes or prelates, priests or bishops, synods or assemblies, may say to the contrary. This is the only doctrine of equal rights worth a straw, no matter what the religious sectarist may say, whether he be Christian or non-Christian, Jew or Gentile, Turk or Brahmin.

The trouble with us here in this Christian country is

that the popular religionist or Christian legislator refuses to admit that he is a sectarist, or that there is any other great religion in the world but his own—much less any other *true* religion. None but his own is worthy to be taken into account in the affairs of the State. Much less should Secularism be recognised, or even the obvious rights of its votaries. With few exceptions, wherever and whenever he has the power in his hands with which to back up this notion, he religiously and conscientiously uses it. But outside of every religion right is right; and *might* alone must always morally fail to make *right*.

Perhaps
x There is already a large and rapidly growing class of the population in Canada, and in every enlightened country, who do not, and cannot, accept any of the current creeds. But, while rejecting religious dogma, they believe in morality, and practise it—at any rate as well as their more pretentious religious neighbors. They pay their taxes, obey the laws, and are what may fairly be called good citizens of the State. The State is, therefore, morally bound to protect them in their rights. The State, therefore, has no right to tax them on account of any other man's religion or the religious teaching of any other man's children. We may concede that the State has the right to tax the citizen for the secular education of those of its citizens unable to pay for themselves, but it has no right whatever to tax him for religious teaching of any kind. The State ought to have nothing at all to do with any of the religions, popular or unpopular, further than to tolerate all of them (even the noisy Salvationists except when they disturb the peace) and protect every citizen in his

religious or non-religious rights; and these rights include the privilege to teach his religion, whatever it may be, to his children at home, and have it taught them in his Sunday school and his church, but *not in the public schools at other people's expense*. The State should also vouchsafe to every religion and every sect the privilege of establishing schools, Sunday or Monday, for themselves, where they could have their religion taught to their heart's content, without let or hindrance, but strictly and exclusively at their *own expense*. This is the only kind of justice that will stand a test, the only species of common sense worthy the name.

We are told by the opponents of secular schools that they are "godless," and such teaching, therefore, necessarily vicious—or at least very defective—tending to vice and crime. Rev. John Langtry, at a recent meeting of Synod in Toronto, in a motion which he submitted to the meeting looking to the establishing of Protestant separate schools in Ontario, apparently in order to be up with the Roman Catholics in this matter; and looking to the legal and compulsory introduction of Christianity into "every public school in the land," broadly asserted, "that the daily record of breaches of trust, fraud, speculation, forgery, and other crimes which godless education would increase . . . bear alarming testimony to the evil consequences which mere secular education is producing."

This rev. gentleman seemed to forget, or conveniently ignored the fact, that education is *not now Secular* but *Christian* and *religious* to all intents and purposes; and, therefore, if it fails to turn out good citizens he and his religion are to blame—not Secularism, which has

never yet had a fair chance to show what it can do. Education begins at the mother's breast; and as the facts are to-day the child gets its religious education at home, at the church, at the Sunday school (which every church has running) and at the Separate and so-called Public schools. If Mr. Langtry's catalogue of vice and crime above enumerated is due to education at all it must surely be due to Christian education, for Christianity is still the prevailing religion in Church and State in this country. It may not be out of place here to note the fact that the whole tribe of official and contracting "boodlers"—high and low—whose speculations, frauds, rascalities, and official corruption ("smelling to heaven") are now being exposed to the light of the day at the Capital of this humiliated Dominion, are men who were mostly educated in those *godly*—very *godly*—and religious schools which are so exemplary, and trained and nurtured by that "only true religion" which is the boast of the "Holy Mother Church," and which runs the politics and legislation as well as the religion of Quebec.

Mr. Langtry seems also to forget that the population of the prisons is distinctly religious not secular; and that almost every absconding defaulter or lecherous licentiate in "high life" as well as low life in these days is a pillar in some church; or, perhaps, a Sunday school teacher, or some pious and exalted exemplar of that sort!

Assuming for a moment that their religion is good and true, and is the regenerating and reforming power among men which they claim it to be, the question is a pertinent one: "What are these thousands of well-paid priests and parsons about, with their thousands of

churches and cathedrals, and Sunday schools, and separate schools, and parochial schools, and numerous other pious agencies and influences, that they must, forsooth, come forward and beg the State to do what they themselves ought to do; and depend on the public schools to do what they themselves ought to do, and what they are well paid for doing?" How is it that they come forward thus, and voluntarily "confess judgment," and acknowledge (for that is just what it amounts to) that they and their multiform forces are failing in regenerating society—that they cannot with all their complicated religious machinery turn out good citizens? Will Mr. Langtry or somebody else answer? Why should these reverend and right reverend parsons and priests come begging the special aid of the State to help them in their own special work, and thus tyrannize over the citizen? If this is not an abject and humiliating confession of weakness on their part, and impotency on the part of their boasted religion, I know not what is! There must be "something rotten in the State of Denmark" else the clergy "move in a mysterious way," their little wonders to perform. The truth of the matter is, however, perfectly palpable. That the decomposition (or, shall we magnanimously say, *purification*) of one of the most stupendous systems of truth and error, good and evil, which humanity ever produced, has commenced, and is, indeed, well advanced, is perfectly obvious to him who can read the signs of the times.

Religion of that kind however has about had its day; and it has had its opportunity in the work of education. Christianity has had a long trial and test in training the

young and forming human character, and it has failed—miserably failed. Let Secularism now have a trial; let Science now try her hand.

Wherever the home and school have been secularized the results have been salutary and satisfactory. Secular schools would be no blind experiment with us. In several countries, public education has been secularized and no kind of religious instruction is allowed in the public schools. This is true of France, of some of the States of Germany, and some parts of Switzerland and Holland. While the results are favorable, and more than could be reasonably expected under the circumstances, the test of secular teaching and training so far has not been a fair one, because there is the counter-vailing influence of the error and superstition which are imbibed by the child at home and at the church—from parent and priest.

How the proper teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, etc., and the co-incident inculcation, by precept and example, of kindness, honesty, truthfulness, industry and all the moral virtues, can possibly lead to vice and crime, Rev. John Langtry failed to explain.

That a purely secular system of education and training can turn out a better citizen for this world (however it might be about the hypothetical next) than is now being turned out by the home, the Sunday school, the Separate school, and the *quasi*-religious public school, only remains to be tried here to be demonstrated.

The only reason Mr. Langtry gives that secular schools are vicious is that they are "godless." I think it was Lord Bacon who said "it were better to have no

God at all than a bad one," or words to that effect. Men have created many gods in their own imaginations. The world's Pantheon has been full of them, but like other human institutions the gods are coming to an end. They are even now mostly dead and buried, past any resurrection. The remainder will follow in due course, except the universal god of Nature which has never been deified or placed in any of the Pantheons.

Alexander Pope comes nearest to the scientific conception of God.—

“ All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is and God the Soul.”

Secular education is no more godless from the scientific standpoint than Christian education is godless from Mr. Langtry's standpoint. The difference is in the gods, or in the interpretation of them. Science and Secularism fully recognise a *Power* in the Universe (the Noumenon behind phenomena) of the nature and essence of which they claim to know nothing. Mr. Langtry and many other excellent people call this power “God,” and proceed to define it, but in reality they know not one whit more about it than we do, albeit they profess to know a great deal more.

We have, however, one common ground with them here. We all believe in and recognise the existence of this mysterious Power, but we part company as soon as our fellow-travellers begin to define what this Power is, anthropomorphize it, and profess an intimate acquaintance with it. The Christian, with no greater facilities for information on the subject than ourselves, confidently proceeds with his definitions and deductions, which he

forthwith essays to force on everybody else *volens volens*. We decline either to define the Unknowable or to accept his definitions of the Unknowable. True, he is at liberty, and it is his right, to define for himself, and worship in his own way, but he has no right to either crowd his notions on others, or have others taxed to support and extend them. He need not hold up a book to us in one hand (unless he take a sword in the other) as his authority, calling it "divine revelation," for that is assuming just what is to be proved, and the proof is lacking—to the bulk of the world at any rate if not to him. The Mahomedan could follow his example, and did follow it when he had the power, with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other. The exponents of the other great religions might with equal right and reason do the same. That style of argument is, however, going out of fashion in these days. According to present appearances, from this on, the religion that cannot stand on its merits, and hold its own in a peaceable way by reason and moral suasion, must go to the wall, as the gods appear to be indifferent and careless as to what happens to any of their religions.

Secularism, therefore, is no more "godless" in the highest and noblest sense than Christianity is—not so much so according to Bacon just quoted,—and if there is any advantage, educational or otherwise, in a high and noble, but modest, conception of the "Soul of the Universe," the great Unknown, Secularism has it.

The assumption that secular education is essentially vicious is predicated on that other assumption that religion and morality are inseparable if not identical. Now, did we believe that morality were dependent upon

religion, and religious teaching indispensable to moral teaching, we would be as strongly opposed to secular schools as those who do believe that fallacy. It is quite natural that every religion should claim morality as an essential and integral part of itself. But the truth is morality is no essential part of any religion or any creed, that is, it belongs to none of them by right or priority. Even Christianity, while inculcating some high moral principles, can lay no original claim to those principles. Nor can any one religion on the face of the earth, either of the past or the present. Morality is a development of humanity and is, therefore, the common property of humanity. The gods have no claim to it either theoretically or practically—especially practically, as they would appear, from the accounts before us, to be rather an immoral lot.

The “Golden Rule,” to do unto others as you would they should do unto you, is the best moral precept to be found in the New Testament, but that excellent precept does not belong to the New Testament ; or to the Old Testament—to the Christians or to the Jews. Confucius of China, Aristotle and Isocrates of Greece, and others, taught the golden rule several centuries before the Christian era. Every moral precept of Christianity antedates the New Testament. I have not the space here to enter fully into this point, but every impartial scholar knows the statement to be true. Buckle, the great historian, in his “History of Civilisation,” says,—“To assert that Christianity communicated to men moral truths previously unknown, argues on the part of the assertor gross ignorance or wilful fraud.”—Vol. 1, p. 129. John Stuart Mill says,—“It can do truth no service

to blink the fact known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith."

This great truth, now so fully recognised by the secular and scientific learning of the age, occasionally forces itself upon the religionist. History, observation and the facts before him sometimes convince even the educated Christian of an unpleasant truth, against his will as it were. The Bishop of Hereford, in his "Bampton Lectures," frankly declares that, "The principles of morality are founded in our nature, independently of any religious belief, and are, in fact, obligatory even upon the Atheist."

Modern science ascribes to the moral sentiments of man a strictly *natural* origin and development. Morality, therefore, being a natural element and a human product, is essentially secular, and hence a necessary part of secular education. While moral teaching and training are so highly essential, no religious teaching of any kind is necessary to a sound and complete education. As the youthful, plastic mind will accept and assimilate any religion or creed which it happens to be taught, no matter how erroneous or absurd, it stands to reason that the time for religious doctrine (if there is any proper time for it) is when the mind is formed and the judgment mature, so that the subject may select a religion for himself among the many rival and conflicting systems before him, or select none at all as his judgment may direct. Indeed, I regard it as morally wrong to cram a religion of any kind into a child. (The reader will

please bear in mind that I am using the word religion here as standing for a creed, or body of speculative doctrines or dogmas, and quite apart from ethics.) People are learning, as we have just seen, to distinguish theoretically as well as practically between morality and religion, which are in reality as different as day and night—one being truth and light and the other for the most part error and darkness. They see in every-day life the not uncommon spectacle of a very pious and religious person being at the same time grossly immoral ; while they also see what seems a wonderful phenomenon to some,—viz., a moral, exemplary citizen without any religion at all. We also find by turning to the Bible that one of the principal characters there—"a man after God's own heart"—a very religious man—was a very immoral man according to the record. Morality, from the secular standpoint, is degraded by its association with such religion. Its touch with creeds, till the creeds are purged, is polluting. Let the religionist practise the moral virtues by all means if he can do so consistently with his religion, but in the abstract the two must be divorced. When the truth is fully realised that the supernatural religions do not necessarily include ethics they (the religions) will the more speedily make their exit. When it is understood that *faith* is one thing and *works* another, the Christian regarding faith as the greater of the two, the world will, it is hoped, decide to let the faiths go instead of the works. The Christian Church has never taken very kindly to works either in doctrine or practice. We know how it is with Rome ; and Luther, one of the founders of Protestantism, it is said, clipped the Epistle of St. James out of his Bible because James put

too much stress on works to suit Luther. At any rate he has left his opinion of James on record as follows:—
 “The Epistle of James, I account the writing of no apostle ; it is an epistle of straw.”

A quarter of a century ago (and still for aught I know) you could hear from the pulpit of Methodist “revivalists” at their “protracted meetings” the following choice teaching,—“Come forward to the anxious seat and seek religion and be converted and saved. *Your morality will damn you.* You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved, etc., etc.” But this is a religious philosophy which is becoming obsolete, and is now mostly relegated to the country villages and backwoods. The polished and politic parson of the fashionable city church preaching to a cultured congregation has, as a rule, but little to say about those old-fashioned biblical doctrines so odoriferous of brimstone ; and still less has he to say out of the pulpit about them.

As one of the many indications of the present wholesome trend of thought and sentiment away from faiths and creeds and towards works and moral principle, I shall quote here from a recent editorial in the leading popular tribune in the Dominion. The writer, at this possible turning-point in our political affairs, in advocating a radical and general purification of our corrupt politics, utters the following,—

“A great historian, who was also a great economist, has remarked that while the crowd is apt to worship the man who has had the hardihood to set himself above moral sentiment, sound observation teaches that moral sentiment is the quintessence of practical wisdom,

and that as *morality is the only way to individual perfection and happiness so it is the only way to public prosperity and the preservation of the State.*"

I have italicised the last sentiment as being no less significant than true as a sign of the times. There is nothing here about religion; but morality is recommended as the "only way to individual perfection" as well as the only safeguard of the State.

The very fact that every religion—great or small—has its own peculiar code of ethics (and some of them are very peculiar), and that Christian ethics, since the beginning, have been "on the wing," as it were, and changing front from time to time, shows that the highest morality—the genuine article—is the creation and result, not of any religion or creed, but of the secular and social progress of mankind. Were a true religion the parent of true moral principles the principles would not be liable to change, or be susceptible of repair, any more than a Divine Revelation would come to need "revision!"

Rev. John Langtry, in speaking to his motion, referred to in the foregoing, is reported to have said that "Agnostics thought there was nothing in man worth developing but intellect, and these people were desirous of enforcing their views into the public school system." Rev. Prof. Clark, who seconded Mr. Langtry's motion, ventured the assertion that "secular education cultivated a certain brutality and coarseness of manner and destroyed sentiment."

What the clergy hope ultimately to gain by thus persistently misrepresenting and distorting the views and positions of people at least as exemplary and useful

in the community as themselves is difficult to understand. They may gain a transitory advantage by imposing upon the ignorance of some, and pandering to the prejudices of others, but eventually such a course must recoil upon themselves. Nothing could be further from the truth than the above utterances from these two prominent and reverend Christians. Spencer, Mill, Tyndall, Huxley, Bradlaugh, Holyoake, and Watts, may be called leading and eminent representatives of Agnosticism and Secularism ; and I submit that these reverend gentlemen cannot quote a single line from the writings of any of them to give even a semblance of truth or justification to their assertions.

Those great leaders in the world of thought and sentiment teach just the opposite. In fact, Secularism is the only philosophy which inculcates the normal and proper cultivation and development of the whole nature of child and adult—all that is good in both ; and we hold that the natural and legitimate function of every human faculty is good *per se*. Christianity cannot consistently do this, for she teaches that man is by nature “utterly depraved,” having a heart “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” and hence that much of that nature must be suppressed, and the “flesh” of that wicked heart “crucified.”

Secularism says, most emphatically, not so ! Man (much less woman) is not by nature utterly depraved or essentially bad. On the contrary, every human faculty is naturally good. The ultimate normal function of every faculty is good. The normal function of every passion even, and every propensity, is good. Vice is only a perversion of these faculties, resulting from misdirection,—from false teaching, training, and un-

favorable surroundings. Crime is only the abuse of passions and propensities which are in themselves legitimate. This is the teaching of modern mental science, whatever the Bible or the churches may teach to the contrary on the subject. Secularism, in accordance with such science, teaches how to *use* all the faculties and powers, and how not to *pervert* or *abuse* any of them.

The moral and social elements of humanity are no less important and sacred to the Secularist than the intellectual. Even the "fleshly" elements, instead of being essentially base, and "carnal" and "depraved," are normally good, and necessary to the existence, happiness, and continuance of the race. Secular education therefore, aims at guiding and directing the passions and propensities instead of trying to suppress them and "crucify" them. It places reason and the moral sense at the *helm* of human conduct.

In justice to the lay element of the Anglican Synod, to which the Rev. Mr. Langtry's motion was presented, it must be said that through their opposition it failed to carry, even after the author had eliminated the obnoxious portion quoted above, which, it seems, the Rev A. H. Baldwin requested to be removed from the resolution because, as he frankly put it, it was "wholly untrue!" The defeat of the semi-expurgated motion by the lay delegates, while the clergy stood for it 40 to 16, is but another proof that the pew is ahead of the pulpit in the onward march of progress.

That obnoxious secular education, which, it is said, would be "godless" and, therefore, vicious, would be at any rate intellectual, and moral, and social,—even

æsthetic and sentimental, under the guidance of reason and an enlightened moral sense.

To the sincere believer in the New Testament it may seem very presumptuous and even astounding that we should want or expect anything higher and better in moral teaching than his religion affords, but that is what we earnestly desire and urgently demand.

Judge Westbrook of the United States, in writing on this question, says,—“ We want something for our State Schools that is more practical, and better adapted to this commercial age. We want a *higher morality* than is taught in the New Testament. We want higher and more noble conceptions than are given in the parable of the ‘Unjust Judge,’ and more just and equitable principles than are taught in the parable of the ‘Unjust Steward,’ or the ‘Laborers in the Vineyard,’ or the ‘Ten Talents.’ We want a morality that relates to *this* life rather than to the *next*. We do not want the possession of property held up as a crime, and poverty represented as a virtue entitling one to a seat in the future kingdom. We want good homes to live in *now*, rather than ‘Mansions in the Skies.’ We do not want a morality that appeals to selfishness only, that discriminates in favor of celibacy, and that only tolerates marriage as a remedy for lust, as taught in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. I repeat that we want a *higher morality* than the morality of the New Testament.”*

And I shall add that we, too, not only want a higher morality than that, but the world imperatively needs it,

*“ Shall the Bible Be Read in Our Public Schools ? ” J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

as amply attested by Rev. Mr. Langtry's foregoing catalogue of vice and crime.

And while even the New Testament is thus fundamentally defective in secular ethics, and hence inadequate as an educational guide morally and socially, the Old Testament is still worse; for it not only bears the above defects, but much of it, both in precept and example, is positively pernicious and polluting to the youthful mind. Indeed, it seems to have the same lamentable effect on the adult believer, judging from the scandalous immoralities among its devotees, high and low. Because the Protestant sects of Christianity proclaim an "open Bible" for the people they deny the pernicious influence on the young of their open Bible; but because the Church of Rome discourages an open Bible for the people, seeking to limit it to the priesthood, that church admits its polluting effects upon the young, which we are here deprecating and deploring, and which is one of the chief reasons why we think it ought not to be read in the public schools. A recent issue of a Roman Catholic paper (*The New York Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*,—June 20th, 1891) has the following warning:—

"Examine the Bibles promiscuously distributed in school rooms, and it will be found that certain portions are soiled with much use, and sometimes absolutely worn away by lecherous-minded youths; particular passages are marked to aid in more convenient reference for others; a special delight is taken by many lads to call the attention of the female element in mixed schools to certain verses, expressions, etc., whose reading and study produce the utmost disorder in both sexes."

This is a very significant passage, coming from a Chris-

tian journal, and may well be pondered by every educationalist and other reader. Observe the way the distasteful fact is put, for the damaging admission is evidently made for the purpose for having a shot at the Protestants with their "open Bible." "Certain portions" and "certain verses" of the sacred (?) record are sought out by "lecherous-minded youths," and passed round to the "female element," the reading and studying of which "produce the utmost disorder in both sexes." The proper designation of those "certain" passages would more properly be, shocking and polluting immoralities and obscenities.

Every adult, not a barbarian, who has read the Old Testament through, knows that much of it is utterly unfit to be read in schools or anywhere else among decent or civilized people. In the interests of private purity and public morality the book ought to be either expurgated or promptly suppressed, so far as the Public schools and juvenile reading are concerned.

Apart from the moral and social aspect of the question there are other strong reasons why the Bibles one and all, and the religions one and all, ought to be rigorously excluded from the public schools. One of the chief of these is that the public schools, once thoroughly secularized, the main pretext for State-aided Separate schools would be removed. This is the only satisfactory solution of the Separate school question. Let the Schools be secularised, let the British North America Act be revised and amended, and let Ontario, Manitoba, and every other province control their educational matters as they have a right to do. Quebec has or had no right to tie up Ontario and keep her forever bound. All Constitu-

tions and institutions are more or less defective and must be amended from time to time, as progress may require. These things were not made for all time, or if they were so intended we have the right to unmake them. A past age had no right to legislate for us and bind us. They had a right to act for themselves according to the circumstances and we have the same right. We are, therefore, not eternally bound by what Cartier did, or by what John A. Macdonald did, or any other man or men. We are not bound by the British North America Act only till such time as we can get it revised: and the sooner the better.

Another cogent reason for excluding the Bible from the schools is, that Modern Science has declared against it. Her leading authorities tell us that the teachings of the Bible and the facts of science in regard to the creation of the world, the Noachian deluge, and other matters, are in direct conflict, beyond the possibility of adjustment. Why, then, should the child be taught scientific error, even in the name of religion? The thing is morally wrong, as well as against the material interests of the child; and no theological subtlety or sacred sophistry can make it otherwise.

A few years ago Prof. Huxley was a member of the London (England) School Board, when, in discussing this question, he addressed the Board as follows. In speaking of the first chapter of Genesis he said:—"The reading of this chapter would convey—whatever the chapter was intended to convey—that the world was made in six natural days. I don't say whether this is the right interpretation or not; but I appeal to the common sense of the Board whether that is not the interpretation which every child capable of understanding the

English language would naturally derive from the statement contained in the book of Genesis? And, that being the case, it is perfectly certain that this statement is erroneous, and no more capable of being disputed than whether the earth stands still or not. I submit that it is an absolute crime that this Board should sanction the instilling into the minds of children statements which are not true, and which the instruction they receive a few years later will infallibly upset. What I ask, and what I have a right to ask, and what you as honest men must grant, is this, that these tender children shall not be taught that which you do not yourselves believe."

Were the Bible quite free from the moral and social objections against it, its demonstrated errors in science, history, and ethnology would be more than sufficient to condemn it as a school book; and Prof. Huxley deserves the thanks of every true friend of education for the fearless stand he has taken against the Bible in the schools.

With our Public schools secularised, and some other important changes made in the system, education might become the power for good in the land, and the engine of enlightenment and progress, which it ought to be, but which it is not at present.

Let public education, therefore, be completely secularised; let the system be turned round, placing the *useful* first and the *ornamental* last; let physical education take first place; let *objective* teaching, off the bench and on foot, largely take the place of *subjective* teaching on the bench and in confinement; let moral training be conducted on natural instead of theological lines; let a sound mind be built up in a sound body by building up the body first, and the upward development of humanity will be thereby greatly accelerated.



